

The Honorable Lisa Jackson
Administrator
United States Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Ariel Rios South Building
Washington, DC 20460

October 29, 2010

Re: Request for Initiation of Clean Water Act Section 404(c) in area near Bristol Bay, Alaska

Dear Administrator Jackson,

As chefs, restaurateurs, and members of the food community, we seek your help in protecting one of our nation's most sustainable and healthy foods, Bristol Bay sockeye salmon, from the proposed Pebble Mine and large-scale mineral development. Unlike the majority of other wild salmon stocks along the West Coast, Bristol Bay sockeye is abundant and well-managed but it faces unprecedented threats from large-scale mineral development. This is where you can help.

With up to 60 million wild salmon returning each summer to Bristol Bay, Alaska, it is our nation's largest and most valuable wild salmon fishery, making it a critical food and revenue source for thousands of Americans. The Bristol Bay fishery employs over 4,000 people each season and generates hundreds of millions of dollars for America's economy annually. Bristol Bay's fishery not only sustains the livelihoods of fishermen and seafood processors, it also greatly impacts those of us who rely on sustainable wild salmon fisheries for our businesses. Wild Pacific salmon is an internationally recognized and prized food that consumers increasingly seek out, which makes it an essential and irreplaceable part of our menus.

Although Bristol Bay is a salmon stronghold, the region's healthy ecosystem could be severely damaged if plans for the development of the proposed Pebble Mine go forward. Located on state land in the headwaters of two of Bristol Bay's major salmon-producing rivers, Pebble is a massive gold and copper sulfide deposit. If developed, it would be one of the world's largest open-pit metal mines. Scientists have identified a slew of risks associated with this project, including acid mine drainage, industrial discharges, and toxic waste that would require perpetual treatment. In addition to Pebble, other mining projects may go forward on federal land nearby due to a Bush Administration plan that removed mining restrictions on 1.1 million acres of Bureau of Land Management land.

As chefs, restaurateurs, and food lovers, we feel these risks to Bristol Bay are unacceptable. If we allow these mining projects to advance, we endanger a delicious and nutrient-rich food that millions of Americans value and demand. Bristol Bay presents an opportunity to permanently protect this wild food source that sustains an irreplaceable ecosystem and an invaluable marketplace. Therefore, we urge you to use your authority under the Clean Water Act to oppose the Pebble Mine and permanently protect the Bristol Bay fishery.

Sincerely yours,

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